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Iranian president declares unshakable support for Palestine

Detailed News On Page-08

LHC's first woman CJ sworn in

Detailed News On Page-08



Shaheen's 'heated argument' with coach revealed

Detailed News On Page-06



Azerbaijan President arrives in Pakistan

Pak, Azerbaijan discuss 2\$ billion investment boost

'Pakistani people delighted with visit of Azerbaijani president', says PM Shehbaz

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Azerbaijan have discussed to enhance investments worth two billion dollars in areas of mutually beneficial projects. Addressing a joint press stake-out in Islamabad this evening, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said teams of both the countries will further exchange views on this matter tomorrow and hopefully both the countries will be ready to ink an agreement during his upcoming visit to Azerbaijan. He said Pakistan and Azerbaijan have immense investment potential worth billions of dollars in years to come. He said the two countries have agreed to enhance bilateral trade as well. Shehbaz Sharif said Pakistan has always supported Azerbaijan's stand on Nagorno-Karabakh, while the latter has extended similar support for the cause of Kashmiris, who have paid huge sacrifices to achieve their right of self-determination as per UN Security Council resolutions. The Prime Minister also conveyed his best wishes to the Azerbaijan President and its people as the country is prepared to host the COP29 in Baku. It will be significant international event for all developing countries, including Pakistan. He said we are quite confident that under your leadership COP29 will deliver on the Climate Change related issues of developing countries like Pakistan. Speaking on the occasion, the Azeri President said his country looks forward to build a strong partnership with Pakistan at economic and trade level. Expressing satisfaction over the existing level of political ties between the two countries, he said we will increase our bilateral trade volume. The Azeri President said we have identified nine initial priority areas for preferential trade. He said we have discussed several projects in areas of energy infrastructure and defence industry. Referring to Shehbaz Sharif's last year visit to Azerbaijan,

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Pakistan eyes LNG pipeline deal with Russia

Putin proposed construction of LNG pipeline that would pass through Iran to Pakistan and connect to India

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The coalition government led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is exploring a multi-billion dollar agreement with Russia for the construction of a liquefied natural gas (LNG) pipeline, according to media reports. This strategic move follows a recent offer by Russian President Vladimir Putin during his meeting with PM Shehbaz on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit. Putin proposed the construction of an LNG pipeline that would pass through Iran to Pakistan and potentially connect to India. During their discussion, PM Shehbaz emphasized the potential to enhance bilateral trade between Pakistan and Russia, expressing a

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev holds a meeting with Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

Pak 'agrees' to slap tax on agri income

The provincial governments sought time to submit a plan

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has 'agreed' to the imposition of tax on agriculture income during talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). International Monetary Fund (IMF) officials held virtual negotiations with the provincial officials of Pakistan for the new loan programme. Sources said the IMF officials urged the provincial authorities to slap tax on agricultural income, which the provinces of Pakistan reportedly agreed upon. The provincial governments of all four provinces of Pakistan sought time to submit a plan for imposing tax on agricultural income. The plan would be submitted to

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UNHCR welcomes extension for Afghan refugees

Candler acknowledged and commended the country for hosting Afghans for many decades

DNA

ISLAMABAD: UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency Thursday welcomed the Government of Pakistan's decision to extend the Proof of Registration (PoR) cards for one year, until 30 June 2025. "This announcement brings a wave of relief for Afghan refugees, and shows that Pakistan's

Continued on Page 06

No talks planned with TTP

44,000 Afghans in Pak still awaiting US, foreign resettlement

With its latest actions, Israeli occupation forces have once again demonstrated their contempt for international law and the basic tenets of decency and acceptable international behaviour, she said

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: At least 44,000 Afghans approved for relocation to Western nations following the Taliban's return to power are still waiting in limbo in Pakistan, the Foreign Office (FO) said on Thursday. FO spokeswoman Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said that three years after the Taliban takeover, there were still 25,000 Afghans approved for relocation to the US living in Pakistan. A further 9,000 Afghans resident in Pakistan have been accepted by Australia, as have 6,000 by Canada, 3,000 by Germany, and more than 1,000 by Britain - all yet to be relocated. "We have urged them to expedite the approval and visa issuance process for these countries, for these individuals, so that they are relocated as early as possible," Baloch told reporters at a weekly press briefing. Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch,

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Govt 'decides to initiate national dialogue' on mily op

Sources say PM Shehbaz has taken cabinet members into confidence over new operation's scope

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Finalising its strategy regarding Operation Azm-e-Istehkam, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif-led government has decided to initiate a national dialogue to root out terrorism and extremism in the country. PM Shehbaz, the sources added, has taken cabinet members into confidence over the new counter-terrorism operation's scope and the reason behind launching the new anti-terror drive.

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Court order reveals Imran's role in May 9th incidents

Order reveals PTI founder not only incited people but also instructed party leaders to create chaos

COURT REPORTER

LAHORE: PTI's founder Imran Khan had delegated the task of attacking military installations, government properties, and police officials to exert pressure for his release in case of his arrest. This revelation came from a detailed order issued by Anti-Terrorism Court Judge Khalid Arshad, who dismissed Imran Khan's bail plea in a case related to the May 9 riots, including the Jinnah House attack. On July 9, the ATC judge announced in court the dismissal of Imran Khan's bail plea, stating that a detailed order would follow later. The order revealed that Imran Khan not only

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Briefs

JI reschedules sit-in plan

Jamaat-e-Islami to hold sit-in on July 26 instead of July 12

DNA

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Hafiz NaeemurRehman postponed the planned sit-in against the government due to Ashura. Earlier, JI had announced to hold sit-in in Islamabad against the exorbitant electricity bills on July 12 (today). Addressing a press conference in Lahore, JI emir said that they will now hold sit-in on July 26 instead of July 12. "We have a track record of holding sit-ins in the country. We have only rescheduled our plan in respect of Ashura," said Hafiz Naeem. He added that rallies will reach Islamabad on July 26 from all parts of the country. The JI emir was of the view that the government has failed to provide relief to the masses.

PTI urges nation to stand up for dignity

PTI sounds alarm Sharif family's political presence a threat to constitution

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Spokesperson said that PML-N senior leader Javed Latif further exposed the reality of the February 8 mega polls robbery, who clearly expressed his dissociation from the mandate thief Shehbaz government. PTI Spokesperson sounded alarm that as long as the Sharif family remained in politics, the constitution would continue to be trampled, and the people's right to rule would be crushed. He urged the nation to prepare for a decisive moment to reclaim their stolen mandate and restore their lost dignity, as the time had come to hold the ruling party accountable for their actions.

Zardari warns PML-N

'We know how to form and topple govts'

The president lashes out at the coalition partner over its handling of the IMF deal

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: President Asif Ali Zardari has criticised the PML-N-led government over its handling of International Monetary Fund (IMF) deal and its reliance on loans. "The IMF loans are a test for the public," Zardari said, accusing the PML-N of failing to manage the government effectively. "We know how to form and dismantle governments," he declared, promising that the PPP would take decisive action. Party leaders voiced their concerns about the lack of cooperation from the Punjab and federal governments. "We are not getting our full rights," a leader complained, pointing out that electoral issues remain unresolved. Zardari assured the leaders of addressing their grievances directly, stating his commitment to active engagement in Islamabad and Lahore. He emphasized the PPP's unmatched capability in Pakistani politics, viewing criticism of the party as a form of recognition.

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Reserved seats verdict today

SC orders 'humane treatment' in civilian trials by mily courts

AGP assures that family meetings with detainees would resume immediately, allowing one day per week

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Thursday directed that detainees involved in civilian trials in military courts must receive "humane" treatment. A seven-member larger bench, led by Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, convened to hear the appeals concerning the trial of civilians in military courts. Brigadier Imran, the focal person for detainees'

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Fin Min calls for overhaul of military pensions

Pakistan to clinch new IMF bailout deal this month, says Finance Minister Aurangzeb

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb on Thursday said that Pakistan would strike a deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) this month, expressing optimism about the positive progress in talks between Islamabad and the global lender to reach a staff-level agreement on a new bailout programme. The government is looking to clinch the IMF agreement on a bailout of more than \$6 billion after addressing all of the lender's requirements in its annual budget. "The talks with the IMF are progressing positively," the finance czar said while briefing the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Finance. Aurangzeb informed the body that no country could run on a 9% tax-to-gross domestic product (GDP) ratio and pledged to raise the ratio to 13%. "The Fund requires taxation on the actual income which is fair," the minister said. The federal government presented

Continued on Page 06

Flour shortage feared as millers go on strike

Government has imposed withholding tax on different stages of supply chain

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Flour mills in several cities of the country have stopped wheat grinding and flour supply across the country from today (Thursday), prompting fears of a flour crisis, as they observe a strike against the newly-imposed withholding tax. In the budget 2024-25, the government has imposed withholding tax on different stages of the supply chain of staple food by

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IHC overturns MCI's tax hike: ICCI President

Bakhtawari reaffirmed ICCI's commitment to safeguarding the interests of Islamabad's business community and residents in future too

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark decision, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) has invalidated the Municipal Corporation Islamabad's (MCI) controversial 400% property tax increase. The court has mandated MCI to revert to the tax

rates established before the 2019 hike. The ruling came after a petition from the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and other stakeholders, who challenged MCI's unilateral tax escalation. This follows a similar victory in 2019 when ICCI successfully contested a 300% tax in-

crease. Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani, presiding over the recent hearing, issued a stay order against the latest tax hike and demanded a timeline from the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for the upcoming Local Bodies Elections. The ECP assured the court of elections on September 29, with a notification to follow within two weeks. The ICCI Solicitor argued that the tax hike was excessive and violated Section 88 of the Islamabad Local Government Act, 2015. The court concurred, highlighting that the MCI Administrator had overstepped his authority. On his part, the ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari hailed the verdict, describing it as a "cool breeze" for the business community and residents. He hoped that MCI would comply with the court's decision and continue collecting taxes at the 2019 rates. Bakhtawari reaffirmed ICCI's commitment to safeguarding the interests of Islamabad's business community and residents in future too.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi meeting with the Leader of Dawoodi Bohra Community Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin.—DNA

All arrangements finalized in KP for Muharram: CS

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry on Thursday said that all the arrangements regarding administration and security have been finalized across the province for the holy month of Muharram. He expressed these views during a high-level meeting held here at the Commissioner office which was also attended by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Additional Chief Secretary Home Muhammad Abid Majeed, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Akhtar Hayat Khan Gandapur, Commissioner Dera Zafarul Islam Khattak, Regional Police Officer Nasir Mehmood Satti and other officers concerned. The Chief Secretary said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur had issued special instructions for taking steps to maintain peace in Dera Ismail Khan. The religious scholars should also play their positive role in maintaining peace as Islam also teaches a lesson of peace and brotherhood, he said. "All the gatherings and processions across the province will be closely monitored," the Chief Secretary said and added that no one would be allowed to create unrest. The participants were briefed about the security plan and other arrangements in Dera Ismail Khan for the holy month of Muharram. Speaking on the occasion, IGP Akhtar Hayat Khan Gandapur said all the security arrangements have been finalized for peaceful conduct of Muharram. He added that a comprehensive security plan was formed for Muharram which was being implemented across the province. He vowed that a police training school would be established in Dera Ismail Khan soon. Keeping in view the shortage of police, he said that the process for new recruitments was underway.—APP

ISSI launches Dr. Jaspal's book on Nuclear Arms

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Arms Control and Disarmament Centre (ACDC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized a book launch titled: Nuclear Arms Control in South Asia: Politics, Postures, and Practices, authored by Professor Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, Dean of Social Sciences and Professor at the School of Politics and International Relations, at Quaid-i-Azam University, at the ISSI. The occasion was graced by General (Retd.) Zubair Mahmood Hayat, former Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSC), as the chief guest. Ambassador Tahir Hussain Andrabi, Additional Secretary, (ACDIS) MOFA; Dr. Zafar Iqbal Cheema, Founding President SVI &

former Dean of Social Sciences, QAU; and Air Commodore Khalid Banuri, Advisor Jinnah Centre for Character & Leadership (JCCL), AHQ were among the discussants. The chief guest Gen. Zubair Hayat, commended the author for writing this timely book that was academically rich and solid. The analysis of India's and Pakistan's doctrines and postures were interesting and well-researched and had enriched the debate. He emphasized the importance of authentic Pakistani narratives, such as contained in this book. He stated that the core element of Pakistan's security was nuclear deterrence. Intensifying major-power competition and global trends in arms control were not encouraging and were emulated at the regional level. He added

that South Asia lacked strategic stability due to India's 'Hindutva-driven' ideology. India's belligerent behavior in the region was getting advanced due to the 'exceptionalism' that major powers granted India. India had used arms control to buy time, includes in political posturing, and pursue look-good strategy. He stated that the Indian pursuit of emerging technologies was adding further stress to South Asia. Indian strategic capabilities were being expanded to the Indian Ocean which was very dangerous but there was a muted silence in world capitals. He emphasized that greater security would be achieved if nuclear apartheid was abolished, where India's exceptionalism was done away with.



Saudi delegation calls on IIUI president

ISLAMABAD: A Saudi delegation of industrial experts called on the President of the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi, on Thursday and appreciated the high level of professionalism of the institution. The objective of the visit was to conduct spot hiring for civil engineering-related positions at the university, according to a news release. The delegation included Mansou Al Shaghab, ACES Regional HR Manager, and Eng. Ayman Tanninah, Branch Manager for the Tabuk Region. They informed the IIUI President about their visit to Pakistan to hire Civil Lab Engineers, Lab Technicians, Civil Surveyors, HSE Officers, and Geotechnical Drillers. Dr. Alotaibi briefed the delegation on the accreditations and achievements of the Faculty of Engineering and Technology (FET), highlighting the recent activities and milestones achieved under the newly implemented strategic plan. He emphasized that the IIUI has been witnessing encouraging results, with FET playing a pivotal role in achieving academic excellence.—APP

120 Pakistanis receive US Fulbright scholarships

Ambassador Blome said. "I'm especially pleased to see such a diverse group of Fulbright participants here, representing the many geographical regions of Pakistan and different walks of life

MEHTAB PIERZADA

ISLAMABAD: US Ambassador, Donald A. Blome, on Thursday congratulated 120 Pakistani students and scholars on receiving prestigious Fulbright scholarships to pursue Master's and PhD programmes in the United States (US). The group also included participants in the Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Programme. The Fulbright Programme is the US government's flagship academic exchange programme, and the Fulbright Programme in Pakistan is one of the largest in the world. Supported by the US government, Fulbright academic exchanges enable students to attend top-tier universities, advance groundbreaking research, share knowledge, and make global connections. To ensure departing students are

well-equipped to navigate the academic landscape and immerse themselves in American culture, the United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP) organized a two-day pre-departure orientation here. "You have made it through an incredibly competitive application process, and you should be proud of your achievement," Ambassador Blome said. "I'm especially pleased to see such a diverse group of Fulbright participants here, representing the many geographical regions of Pakistan and different walks of life." This year's cohort is embarking on their educational journey at 66 U.S. universities. They will study various disciplines, including health, education, computer sciences, environmental studies, and social sciences. The group includes 102 Mas-

ter's and 13 PhD students, as well as five Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant fellows. Women comprise 55 percent of the group, underscoring the programme's commitment to gender equality. The Fulbright scholarship covers travel, living stipends, health insurance, and tuition for the entire period of study. The Executive Director of USEFP, Rita Akhtar, welcomed the recipients and encouraged them to take full advantage of their time in the US. "The Fulbright scholarship is a life-changing opportunity that opens doors to world-class education and research opportunities. Through this programme, you will gain access to renowned faculty, cutting-edge facilities, and a diverse academic environment that encourages innovation and creativity.

AJK's Forest dept remarkable achievements under GPP

Despite operating with limited resources, the dedication and professionalism of the AJK Forest Officers and employees have set a benchmark for environmental conservation efforts

MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI



The forest department of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has demonstrated exceptional performance under the Green Pakistan Program (GPP), launched in 2019 across all four provinces, AJK, and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). Despite operating with limited resources, the dedication and professionalism of the AJK Forest Officers and employees have set a benchmark for environmental conservation efforts. The Green Pakistan Program (GPP) was initiated as a nationwide environmental conservation project aimed at mitigating the adverse effects of climate change, combating deforestation, and protecting the country's natural resources. Launched in 2019, the GPP covers the four provinces of Pakistan—Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, and Balochistan—as well as the regions of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). The program operates on a co-funding basis, with the federal government providing 50% of the funds for the provinces, while the provincial governments contribute the remaining 50%. For AJK and GB, the federal government bears the entire financial responsibility, recognizing the strategic importance and the need

for focused investment in these regions. Azad Jammu and Kashmir is a region of unparalleled natural beauty, characterized by its lush valleys, forested mountains, and diverse ecosystems. However, like many other regions in Pakistan, AJK has not been immune to the adverse effects of climate change and deforestation. The region has faced significant challenges, including land degradation, loss of biodiversity, and the silting of water reservoirs, which pose a threat to both the environment and the local communities. Before the initiation of the GPP, many areas in AJK, including Rawalakot, Bagh, Haveli, Palandri, Muzaffarabad, Neelum, Hattian Bala, Kotli, Mirpur, and Bhimber, had vast tracts of barren land. The need for a comprehensive afforestation program was evident, and the GPP provided a timely and much-needed intervention. The successful implementation of the GPP in AJK can be attributed to the concerted efforts of the Forest Department. Despite facing numerous challenges, including limited resources, difficult terrain, and logistical constraints, the forest officers and employees demonstrated remarkable professionalism and dedication. The AJK Forest Department adopted a strategic approach to the implementation of the GPP. This involved extensive planning, which included the identification of suitable sites for afforestation, the selection of appropriate tree species, and the development of a comprehensive action plan. The department also engaged with local communities to ensure their involvement and support, recognizing that community participation is crucial for the sustainability of afforestation efforts. The geographical terrain of AJK posed significant logistical challenges for the implementation of the GPP. Many of the target areas

were remote and difficult to access, requiring innovative solutions for the transportation of saplings and other necessary materials. The forest department employed creative methods, such as using donkeys and mules for transportation in mountainous areas, to overcome these challenges. The achievements of the AJK Forest Department under the GPP are nothing short of extraordinary. The department not only met but exceeded the program's targets, transforming vast areas of barren land into thriving forests. The following sections highlight some of the key outcomes of their efforts. One of the most visible achievements of the GPP in AJK is the extensive afforestation and reforestation carried out across the region. Areas that were once barren and devoid of vegetation have been transformed into lush, green forests. This has had a positive impact on the local environment, contributing to increased biodiversity, improved soil quality, and enhanced water retention. In Rawalakot, Bagh, Haveli, Palandri, Muzaffarabad, Neelum, Hattian Bala, Kotli, Mirpur, and Bhimber, the transformation is evident. These areas now boast beautiful forests, which serve as a testament to the hard work and dedication of the forest officers and employees. The afforestation efforts under the GPP have also played a crucial role in combating climate change. Forests act as carbon sinks, absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and mitigating the effects of greenhouse gas emissions. The newly established forests in AJK are expected to sequester significant amounts of carbon, contributing to global efforts to reduce the impact of climate change. One of the critical functions of forests is their role in protecting water reservoirs from silting up. The newly established

forests in AJK have helped to prevent soil erosion, which is a major cause of siltation in water bodies. By stabilizing the soil and reducing runoff, these forests have contributed to the protection of the region's water resources. The afforestation efforts have also had a positive impact on biodiversity conservation in AJK. The newly established forests provide habitats for a wide range of flora and fauna, contributing to the preservation of the region's biodiversity. This is particularly important in AJK, which is home to several endangered and endemic species. The exceptional performance of the AJK Forest Department under the GPP has been recognized and appreciated at various levels. The dedication and professionalism of the forest officers and employees have set a benchmark for environmental conservation efforts, and their achievements have been lauded by both national and international organizations. At the national level, the AJK Forest Department has received commendations from the federal government and other relevant authorities. The successful implementation of the GPP in AJK has been highlighted as a model for other regions to follow, showcasing the importance of strategic planning, community involvement, and innovative solutions in achieving environmental conservation goals. The achievements of the AJK Forest Department have also attracted international attention. Environmental organizations and experts have praised the department's efforts, recognizing the significant contribution of the GPP to global climate change mitigation and biodiversity conservation. The success of the program in AJK serves as an inspiration for other countries facing similar environmental challenges.



General Practice

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July 01/Japan
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July 01/Singapore
Armed Forces Day

July 01 / Canada
National Day

July 01/Somalia
Independence Day

July 04/USA
Independence Day

July 05/Algeria
Independence Day

July 09/Argentina
Independence Day

July 09/Mongolia
Revolution Day

July 14/France
National Day

July 15/Brunei
Sultan's Birthday

July 21/Belgium
National Day

July 20/TRNC
Independence Day

July 23/Egypt
National Day

July 26/Cuba
National Day

July 26/Liberia
National Day

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MH.....5611116
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Holy Family.....9290322-7
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RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

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A wake-up call: ensuring LPG safety amid rising usage

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In response to Pakistan's increasing reliance on LPG due to natural gas shortages, bans on new connections, and soaring gas tariffs, the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has organised a national seminar on "Safe Use of LPG - 'Zero' Fatal Accident." The event was held at OGRA's head office in Islamabad to address the need for enhanced safety measures. The seminar was graced by senior officials from the Petroleum Division, Islamabad Police, Motorways Police, Civil Defense, and CEOs of leading LPG sector companies. OGRA Chairman Masroor Khan, along with Member Oil, Member Finance, and the Senior team of OGRA's LPG and Enforcement Departments was



present in the seminar. Mr. Masroor Khan, Chairman OGRA, emphasized that the increasing use of LPG across the country, from

urban centers to remote villages, underscores the urgent need for robust safety protocols. This seminar aims to address these safety

concerns by bringing together industry leaders, policymakers, law enforcement departments, equipment manufacturers, and consum-

ers to discuss and promote best practices in LPG usage. Mr. Zain ul Abideen, Member Oil, pointed out that OGRA is actively engaging with provincial governments, conducting field inspections, and running awareness campaigns to curb illegal LPG activities. Industry experts highlighted the importance of strict adherence to safety standards given the highly flammable nature of LPG. Speakers stressed the need to prevent dangerous practices such as:
- Filling cylinders in cramped areas that hinder emergency services
- Ensuring that only authorized distributors sell LPG cylinders
- Prohibiting hazardous cylinder-to-cylinder transfers
The seminar represents a crucial step towards ensuring the safe usage of LPG and promoting compliance with safety standards across Pakistan. Together, we can prevent accidents and safeguard lives.

PM stresses importance of joint efforts for resilient future

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday called on government departments, civil society, the private sector, and international partners to collaborate for a resilient and equitable future. In his message on World Population Day being observed on Thursday, (July 11, 2024), he stressed the importance of sustainable population growth to ensure every citizen enjoys dignity, security, and prosperity. "Our government is fully committed in its endeavors of providing quality education and skills training to this young generation to compete in a rapidly evolving global economy. Additionally, we are creating sufficient job opportunities for the youth to harness their potential and turn this youth bulge into an asset." "I urge all stakeholders - government departments, civil society, private sector, and our international partners - to join hands in our pursuit of a resilient and equitable future. Together, we can build a Pakistan where every citizen enjoys a life of dignity, security, and prosperity by steadfastly pursuing the path of achieving sustainable population growth." Creating an environment where every Pakistani can thrive requires effective management of our population growth, ensuring a balance between resources and population size to foster economic growth, improve living standards, and reduce poverty, he emphasized. Pakistan's demographic makeup reveals a significant youth majority, comprising over 65% of the population under 30 years old. This dynamic presents dual prospects and difficulties. The nation's youth represent a powerful force for fostering economic growth, innovation, and societal advancement. However, it also brings challenges in areas such as education, employment, and social cohesion. Inclusive data allows us to pinpoint areas needing attention, from healthcare and education to economic opportunities and social protection. "The government recognizes the varied needs and challenges of our population. Equity is fundamental to our development agenda, and by achieving a sustainable population growth rate, we aim to tackle disparities and strive towards a society where all individuals have equitable access to resources and opportunities essential for their success," stated the Prime Minister. The theme for this year's World Population Day, "Embracing the Power of Inclusive Data Towards a Resilient and Equitable Future for All," aligns closely with government's vision for Pakistan. The government is dedicated to ensuring that every individual, community, and voice from across the country is considered in its policies and programs, he said. He stressed the alignment with the global community in reflecting on the critical significance of population issues and their profound influence on Pakistan's development trajectory. With Pakistan's current population exceeding 240 million and growing at a rate of 2.55% annually, projections indicate it could reach 263 million by 2030 and 383 million by 2050.—DNA

CDNS accomplish Rs 1.742 trillion targets in fresh bond in FY 2023-24

Islamic finance has a very important role in the global financial sector at this time and a large part of the economy of many major countries currently includes Islamic finance," he added

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has realized a target of Rs1.742 trillion in fresh bonds and 100 percent of the annual target in the last fiscal year 203-24, from July 1 to June 30th. The National Savings has set an annual target of Rs 1.742 trillion for the year 2023-24, it is encouraging that 100 percent of the target has been achieved, the senior official of CDNS told APP here on Thursday. The CDNS surpassed the annual target and achieved the target of Rs 1.6 trillion in fresh bonds in the fiscal year 2022-23, he said. He said this was an Rs 200 billion additional annual target than the target of Rs 1300 billion for the previous financial year 2021-22. The CDNS has set a reviewed saving target of Rs 1.4 trillion for the financial year (2021-22) which will promote savings culture in the country, he said. Given the current market trend in the country the ambitious target had been set to improve the savings culture further, he added. The official said that work was being done on institutional reforms in CDNS and new reforms and innovations were being introduced. At this time Automated Teller Machine (ATM) has also been introduced in CDNS which will provide enough facilities to the users," he added. The official added that the directorate had set a target of Rs 75 billion for the new financial year 2023-24 for Islamic finance bonds. Replying to a question; he said the CDNS aimed to introduce new dimensions in the Islamic finance sector. Islamic finance has a very important role in the global financial sector at this time and a large part of the economy of many major countries currently includes Islamic finance," he added.—DNA

Govt committed to boost cotton production: Tanveer

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries, Production and National Food Security Rana Tanveer Husain on Thursday reiterated the government's commitment to promote the cotton industry. He said this while addressing the meeting of the Pakistan Central Cotton Committee's governing body, said a news release. The minister stressed that Pakistan's economy heavily relies on cotton production and textile industry growth is linked to good cotton yields. "The textile industry has been granted Rs 10 per unit subsidy on electricity, which will significantly alleviate its financial burdens and alleviate its difficulties to a great extent," he added. He said that research and development must be prioritized, and the government is committed to providing comprehensive support to farmers, ginners, and all relevant stakeholders.—APP

NA Speaker for further strengthening Pak-Germany bilateral ties

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Thursday emphasized further strengthening Pakistan-Germany bilateral ties, particularly through expanding cooperation between parliamentary friendship groups and the exchange of parliamentary dele-

gations. He made these remarks during a meeting with the Parliamentary delegation from Germany, who called on him here. Both sides discussed a wide range of bilateral, regional, and global issues. They expressed contentment over the current state of bilateral relations, including parliamentary ties, and reaffirmed their joint resolve to further expand and diversify mutually beneficial

cooperation. The NA Speaker said Pakistan and Germany enjoy a multifaceted friendly relationship marked by shared interests and a common stance on various regional and international issues. "It is high time to further strengthen parliamentary, cultural, economic, and people-to-people connections between the two countries to attain a shared goal of sustainable development," said the NA Speaker. While discussing trade and economic cooperation bilaterally and in European context, Sadiq mentioned Pakistan's proactive efforts in creating a conducive environment for economic and trade activities, providing friendly countries with significant investment opportunities and mutual benefits. The delegates expressed gratitude to the NA Speaker for the warm welcome and his sentiments for country and its people. They reiterated that Germany views Pakistan as an important regional stakeholder and is committed to further strengthening linkages in all areas of mutual interest, in addition to fostering parliamentary and cultural exchanges. German delegation comprised of Members of German Parliament; Michael Müller, Christoph Schmid and Derya Türk-Nachbaur, Parliamentary officials and representatives of Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Pakistan.



AIOU announces admissions for Fall 2024

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced admissions for the first phase of the Fall 2024 Semester across the country from July 15 (Monday). The admissions for BS (Face-to-Face), MS, MPhil, and PhD programs will only be conducted through online mode. The admission forms and prospectuses for Matric and FA programs will be available from July 15 at the university's main campus in Islamabad, 54 regional offices across various cities, and Swift Centers. According to the AIOU, the admissions for Matric and FA programs can be processed both online and manually. To guide prospective students, facilitation centers have been activated in all regional offices under the instructions of Vice Chancellor, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood. The university staff will always be present at these centers to assist students.—APP

Excise dept brings vehicle registration, essential services to Trail 3

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to make essential services more accessible, the Excise Department will be setting up a mobile facility at Trail 3 in the federal capital on Thursday. This initiative is part of the ICT (Islamabad Capital Territory) Doorstep initiative. From 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., excise staff will be stationed at the parking lot to assist residents with various civic needs. Residents of the surrounding areas can take advantage of these services through a dedicated van. This mobile unit aims to simplify the process of obtaining fuel permits, whether for domestic or commercial use and to facilitate seamless motor vehicle registration. The on-ground service will make these processes quick and straightforward. The initiative is designed to streamline vehicle-related procedures such as registration, transfer, and token tax payment. Beyond these, the mobile Facilitation Center will offer additional services including the issuance of domicile certificates, birth certificates, power of attorney documents.—APP



Briefs

Planning ministry launches PC-III module

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives on Thursday announced the launch of the PC-III module under the Intelligent Project Automation System (iPAS), replacing the previous Project Monitoring and Evaluation System (PMES). "The PC-III module is now functional as of 1st July 2024, replacing the PMES (Project Monitoring & Evaluation System)," the ministry said in a news release. It said all Focal Persons and Project Directors of respective ministries and divisions will upload their project progress/data on the new PC-III module under iPAS, which covered "Project Profiles from PC-I, PC-III-A (Cash Plan and Work Plan) and PC-III (B) Progress Report (Physical Progress)." This development builds on the Planning Commission's earlier success in launching automated PSDP Formulation, PC-I, and PC-II under the iPAS project three years ago. The introduction of the PC-III module is expected to further enhance the efficiency and transparency of project monitoring and evaluation. The iPAS aims to revolutionize project management in Pakistan by providing a unified digital platform for project planning, monitoring, and evaluation.—APP

Advisory Committee discusses release of IMT Spectrum

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Thursday chaired the meeting of Advisory Committee on 'Release of International Mobile Telephony (IMT) Spectrum for Improvement of Next Generation Mobile Broadband Services in Pakistan'. According to press release issued by finance ministry, the meeting was attended by Minister of State for IT and Telecom, Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Chairman Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and senior officials from relevant ministries and departments. The key stakeholders from the telecommunication sector and regulatory authorities briefed the minister on strategic plans for the allocation and utilization of the IMT spectrum. It was mentioned that the release of this spectrum is expected to significantly improve connectivity, enhance Internet speeds, and meet the increasing demand for high-quality data services. The auction process, technical specifications and the time-line for the spectrum release were discussed in the meeting. The Advisory Committee also considered the way forward to promote technological advancements and create an environment conducive to investment and growth in the telecommunications sector. This meeting underscores the government's commitment to advancing digital infrastructure and supporting the country's economic growth.—APP

JazzCash's Arrangements Reviewed

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Rubina Khalid met with Haaris Mahmood, Interim CEO Mobilink Microfinance Bank and Arif Chaudhary, Head of Public Sector Partnerships JazzCash at BISP headquarters. They talked about JazzCash's seamless arrangements for the upcoming BISP tranche for registered deserving beneficiaries. In February 2024, JazzCash was selected as one of the few prestigious financial institutions partnering with the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) to disburse funds to empower marginalised communities. Under the 3-year partnership, JazzCash will facilitate cash withdrawals through biometrically enabled services. This collaboration underscores JazzCash's commitment to advancing financial inclusion to catalyse Pakistan's socio-economic development.—DNA



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets Mr. Ayan Kashif and his family. Ayan Kashif is a student of Daanish School and he secured the first position in the annual exams of Intermediate and Secondary Education Lahore.—DNA

"US approach determines Iran's nuclear posture", experts

Dr Maziar Mozaffari, Professor at the University of Tehran, talked about Iran's transition from soft to smart power in the region based on its flourishing trade relations with regional states after 2021. Discussing the Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline, Dr Mozaffari emphasized that the project could address Pakistan's energy crisis and strengthen economic ties between the two countries

DNA

ISLAMABAD: "Iran, under Dr Masoud Pezeshkian will encourage negotiations with the US, however, Iran's nuclear policy will depend upon the US response," said Mr Pooya Mirzaei, Editor-in-Chief of Nour News in Tehran. He was speaking on an event organized by Institute of Regional Studies on "Iran's Presidential Elections: Implications on Foreign Policy" in Islamabad. He also mentioned that Iran entered a new phase under President Raisi where relations

with the Persian Gulf states were normalized. He stressed that Iran's policy towards the Middle East would remain the same under Dr Pezeshkian as well, however, security and intelligence cooperation of the Arab states with Israel would remain a contentious issue. He further stated that Iran's nuclear policy was separate from its regional policy and any decision on the nuclear issue would depend on the US attitude towards Iran. Earlier, in his keynote address, President IRS, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, highlighted that

Iran's endeavour for global engagement since 2013 reinvigorated during late President Raisi's tenure. Ambassador Saleem mentioned that Iran's 'Look East' policy followed by President Raisi's 'Neighborhood First' policy was a countermeasure to stalled nuclear talks with the US. It helped Iran in reviving its relations with the Arab states and consolidating its ties with the neighbouring countries. Dr Hamed Reza, Secretary General of Asian Mayors Forum in Tehran, argued that major foreign policy decisions in Iran

were taken by the Supreme National Security Council chaired by the President. Dr Reza felt that the revival of talks between Iran and the US was unlikely given the present circumstances. However, the crippling sanctions imposed on Iran actually strengthened its ties with neighbouring countries and Eastern powers, and cemented its status in the grouping of the emerging economies like BRICS and SCO. Dr Maziar Mozaffari, Professor at the University of Tehran, talked about Iran's transition

from soft to smart power in the region based on its flourishing trade relations with regional states after 2021. Discussing the Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline, Dr Mozaffari emphasized that the project could address Pakistan's energy crisis and strengthen economic ties between the two countries. Mr Fraz Naqvi of the IRS noted that Iran's foreign policy was marked by consistency and institutionalism. But since neighbouring states were Iran's first priority in its foreign policy, it would be beneficial for Pak-Iran relations.

KIU awards 153 students China-Pakistan friendship scholarships

ISLAMABAD: Karakoram International University (KIU) Gilgit-Baltistan awarded scholarships to 153 students under the "China-Pakistan Friendship-Ambassadorial Merit-cum-Need Scholarship" program. It was supported by the Embassy of China in Pakistan, Gwadar. Reported on Thursday. Designed to encourage gender balance, 50% of the scholarships were awarded to female students at KIU's main campus and sub-campuses. Of the 153 scholarships, 93 were awarded at the KIU main campus in Gilgit, while 20 each were disbursed among the students of KIU sub-campuses in Diamer, Ghizer, and Hunza. At the main campus, 35 scholarships went to MS graduate students engaged in research, and 58 were awarded to undergraduate students. Each sub-campus awarded 20 scholarships to undergraduate students. Vice-Chancellor of KIU, Engineer Professor Dr. Attaullah Shah, advised the students to improve their academic performance to fulfill the objectives of the scholarship.—APP

IRSA releases 296,700 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 296,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 349,300 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1520.06 feet and was 122.06 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 174,000 cusecs and 135,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1193.45 feet, which was 145.45 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 40,600 cusecs.—APP

Pakistan pavilion impresses trade fair

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan pavilion emerged as a star attraction at the ongoing 30th China Lanzhou Investment and Trade Fair, showcasing a stunning array of handicrafts that captivated the hearts and minds of visitors from around the globe. The five-day event, which opened on July 6 and runs through July 10, provides a vibrant platform for businesses worldwide to showcase their offerings and forge new partnerships, Gwadar Pro reported. At the forefront of the Pakistan pavilion stood Kamal Muhammad, a seasoned veteran of the Lanzhou Fair, making his seventh appearance at the prestigious event. Kamal's display of exquisite handicrafts ranges from intricately embroidered carpets to meticulously carved onyx artifacts. "Participating in the Lanzhou Fair is a golden

opportunity for Pakistani businesses to broaden their horizons and tap into new markets," said Kamal. "We are deeply grateful for this platform and are hopeful for even stronger economic ties with northwest China and beyond in the years to come."

The Pakistan pavilion, set up amidst the bustling exhibition hall of the Gansu International Convention and Exhibition Center, is a popular attraction among visitors. From elaborately stitched textiles to intricately carved wooden artifacts, the products on display not only showcase the artistic talents of Pakistani artisans but also serve as a testament to the country's rich cultural heritage. The five Pakistani enterprises participating in the fair, each specializing in different areas, provided a comprehensive showcase of the country's craftsmanship and creativity. Since its inception in 1993, the China Lanzhou Investment and

Trade Fair has grown into a major platform for promoting investment, trade and regional economic cooperation in Northwest China. This year's fair boasts more than 1,800 exhibitors showcasing a wide range of products across nearly 30 categories, including non-ferrous metallurgy, new materials, renewable energy, modern agriculture, petrochemicals, electronics, water resources, mineral resources, food processing, cultural tourism, healthcare, biopharmaceuticals and consumer products. The participation of the Pakistani delegation in the expo underlines the country's commitment to explore new markets and strengthen economic ties with China and other countries. The diverse range of products exhibited by the five Pakistani companies provided a glimpse into the vibrant handicraft industry landscape in the country and its potential for collaboration and partnership.

ANF seizes over 34 kg drugs in 6 operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting six operations across the country managed to recover over 34 kg drugs and arrested four drug dealers, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that 2.9 kg heroin was recovered from a parcel booked for Bahrain at a cargo office at Islamabad Airport. 1.5 kg ice was recovered from two parcels sent to New Zealand and Qatar from a courier office in Rawalpindi. Over 21.6 kg hashish was recovered from Orangi Town Karachi. 7.8 kg of hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted on service road Islamabad while two suspects were arrested during the operation. Some 900 grams of hashish was recovered from the possession of two suspects arrested near Hunza Hotel Gilgit. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.—APP

Authorities directed to make efforts to ensure peace during Muharram

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak, and Regional Police Officer (RPO), Rawalpindi Region, Babar Sarfraz Alpa have directed the authorities concerned to make all-out efforts to ensure peace during Muharram. Chairing a meeting held at Police Lines Headquarters, the Commissioner and RPO reviewed the security arrangements finalized for Muharram. City Police Officer (CPO) said Khalid Hamdani, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Operations, SSP Investigation, SP, CIA, Divisional SPs, SDPOs, DSP Headquarters, DSP Legal, in-charge branches and other officers were present in the meeting.

FTA with Indonesia stressed

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has stressed that Pakistan needs to work with Indonesia to formulate a free trade agreement (FTA) in order to rectify bilateral trade deficit of up to \$3 billion each year consecutively for the past many years. We should work on Brand Pakistan through single-country exhibitions; exchange of trade delegations; cultural & student exchanges and projecting soft-image of Pakistan in the Southeast Asia region, he added. Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, maintained that ASEAN countries can be a huge export market for Pakistan as it has a population of over 600 million with a very strong middle-class. Their collective GDP in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP) has well surpassed \$10 trillion, he added. Mr. Aman Paracha, VP FPCCI, stated the importance of diversifying imports from Indonesia beyond palm oil and exploring opportunities for Pakistani exports in diverse sectors. He announced FPCCI's plans to organize single-country exhibition in Indonesia to promote trade and address the imbalance. Mr. Asif Sakhi, VP FPCCI, explained that Pakistan needs to think out-of-the-box to work with the friendly country of Indonesia in transfer of technology, investments.—DNA

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Gazans unite against forced displacement

We are not leaving." With these simple words, Gaza residents summarize their stance as the Israeli occupation army renewed attempts to forcibly displace them from their city following thousands of massacres and horrific crimes over the past nine months. On Wednesday, Israeli aircraft dropped leaflets outlining routes they claim are safe corridors, directing Gaza City residents to evacuate to Deir al-Balah and al-Zawaida in central Gaza. Despite the fear and hunger touching every corner of steadfast Gaza, residents cling to their city, expressing their willingness to die rather than leave. Journalist Mohammed Abu Qamar affirms that the occupation is exhausting all options, putting pressure on 700,000 residents of Gaza and the northern governorates to force them to move south. He asserts that those who have endured for ten months can remain steadfast, knowing that killing and targeting will continue whether they are in the north or south of Gaza. We are in the final stage before relief, Allah willing, and Allah will not abandon us," he says. A journalist writes, "After a brutal campaign of starvation, destruction, and killing, the Israeli army is trying to force the residents of Gaza City and the north to move south, claiming to provide 'safe corridors' without inspection. We, the people of Gaza and the north, are as rooted in our land as olive trees. The winds of displacement and destruction will not uproot us. We will stay here, steadfast and immovable. We are not leaving." Activist Ibrahim expresses his refusal to flee, saying, "We've been here for nine months, enduring hunger, thirst, pollution, fear, death, and displacement more than ten times. We survived all the hardships and didn't leave. Now you want us to leave our country and our homes? No, we are not leaving. We will stay here and die in our homes and our land, proudly steadfast to the last breath, Allah willing." Writer Younsri Al-Ghoul warns against complying with the occupation's plans, saying, "Do not fall for their evacuation scheme. We are staying in Gaza. We are not leaving." Despite the harsh conditions, Al-Ghoul's faith in imminent liberation remains unshaken, reminding people of the steadfastness of Muslims during the Battle of the Trench. Community leaders and intellectuals have issued warnings to citizens not to comply with the occupation army's orders, pointing out that the goal is to frighten the residents. Researcher Mohammed Al-Rantisi notes that the Zionist enemy is using its final cards by pressuring the steadfast people in Gaza City and the north to move south, allegedly providing safe corridors without inspection. "Our response is clear: #WeAreNotMoving." Five days after the occupation army began its genocidal war on Gaza, it issued orders for the displacement of Gaza and northern Gaza residents, demanding they evacuate. Hundreds of thousands were forcibly moved to southern Wadi Gaza, while about 700,000 chose to stay. Those who remained in Gaza and the north faced bombing, aggression, and starvation. Those who moved south encountered the same bloody Israeli policy, as invasions and airstrikes continued unabated from the north to the south of the Strip.

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Has Starmer's Britain become a safe haven?

A "safe haven" and an "island of stability". These are not terms typically associated with the UK, especially after the country's shock decision in 2016 to vote to leave the European Union, an act of national self-harm on an epic scale. Yet even before the Labour Party's landslide victory in parliamentary elections on July 4, the UK was relatively stable and predictable. These attributes are increasingly scarce as political and economic turmoil engulfs many large developed and emerging markets. At a time when populist and nationalist parties are pushing their way into mainstream politics, Britain appears to have returned to the path of centrism. The Labour Party, whose election manifesto embraced change yet eschewed many contentious measures and reforms for fear they would cost the party votes, won a thumping majority, giving it the second-largest number of seats in the party's history. Moreover, Prime Minister Keir Starmer's landslide victory was widely anticipated by financial markets and, as Fortham Global Foresight noted, "was a textbook example of a smooth democratic transition" with "no allegations of impropriety, and no one refusing to accept the result". Britain's drama-free election has reinforced the perception among investors that the country has entered a phase of "greater political and policy stability", in the words of JPMorgan. Markets do not know what to make of the result, which is telling in itself. Although many investors are taking comfort from the fact that political gridlock makes it more difficult to implement populist policies, the inescapable truth is that voters in the euro zone's second-largest economy backed populist parties of the left and right. The economic programme of the far-left, moreover, is much more reckless than Truss' plan, exacerbating political divisions. However, the risk of another "Truss moment" in France pales in comparison with the dire consequences of US President Joe Biden's bid for re-election this year. Mounting concerns about his physical and mental state are diverting attention from former president Donald Trump's manifest unfitness for office. They are also eroding faith in the US political system and injecting more uncertainty into post-election economic, monetary and trade policy. At a time when so much is riding on the state of the US economy and geopolitics, the disintegration of the domestic political opposition to a second Trump term – one of the biggest threats to the global economy – is frightening. US politics looks like a slow-motion train wreck, regardless of whatever happens in the next four months. Still, while the turmoil in the US and France accentuates Britain's post-election appeal, Labour's victory belies the deep-seated political and economic problems facing Britain. First, the party's huge majority says more about the quirks of the UK's "first-past-the-post" electoral system than it does about support for Labour. The party's 34 per cent share of the vote was less than the 40 per cent won in 2017 by Starmer's predecessor, the far-left leader Jeremy Corbyn, which gave Labour 150 fewer seats than its current tally. If Britain had a proportional representation voting system, Nigel Farage's far-right Reform UK Party – which won 14 per cent of the vote – would have 94 seats instead of five.

Modi's visit to Russia: Impact on Pakistan

Qamar Bashir



This visit was seen by the USA as an aggression against the USA interests and pursuing the Russian line which later culminated in Cypher wherein allegedly the US while expressing its anger on the independent foreign policy pursued by Imran Khan, asked the state of Pakistan thought ministry of foreign affairs to remove Imran Khan from power otherwise face the dire consequences. Imran Khan was eased out of the government and replaced with a much compliant regime. Of course, there is no similarity between the visit of Imran Khan

Mr. Imran Khan's visit to Russia was monumental in many respects. His visit coincided when Russian in total defiance of the USA and the West invaded Ukraine to punish its unpardonable crime, to vie for membership of the NATO thus bringing the might of the US and the West right on the frontiers of Russia. This visit was seen by the USA as an aggression against the USA interests and pursuing the Russian line which later culminated in Cypher wherein allegedly the US while expressing its anger on the independent foreign policy pursued by Imran Khan, asked the state of Pakistan thought ministry of foreign affairs to remove Imran Khan from power otherwise face the dire consequences. Imran Khan was eased out of the government and replaced with a much compliant regime. Of course, there is no similarity between the visit of Imran Khan and the ongoing visit of the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi to Russia (July 8-9, 2024). Unlike Imran Khan, USA will not dare to ask the Indian establishment to remove Narendra Modi from power, as the punishment for visiting the USA's arch rival Russia, instead his visit will be welcomed and termed as a great diplomatic achievement of India and a reflection of Statesmanship of Modi, compelled by New Delhi's significant geopolitical role in the region. Modi's visit to Russia, where he was received with great pomp and show will have multifaceted impacts on Pakistan, influencing its strategic alliances, regional security dynamics, and economic interests, particularly concerning CPEC. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Russia has the potential to impact Pakistan in several significant ways, given the complex geopolitical dynamics involving India, Russia, Pakistan, and China. Here are the possible manners and ways this visit could affect Pakistan: Modi's visit underscores the enduring strategic partnership between India and Russia. Strengthening these ties could lead to closer military and economic cooperation, which might concern Pakistan given its own strategic interests and alliances. Enhanced Russia-India relations could potentially shift regional power dynamics and influence Pakistan's strategic calculations. Pakistan has been seeking to build closer ties with Russia as part of its broader foreign policy to diversify its alliances beyond traditional partners like China and the U.S. Modi's visit might prompt Russia to carefully balance its relations with both India and Pakistan, ensuring that its growing ties with India do

not alienate Pakistan or India. If Russia deepens its economic and military cooperation with India, it could limit the scope and depth of similar cooperation with Pakistan. This might affect Pakistan's access to Russian military hardware and economic investments, especially if Russia prioritizes its strategic partnership with India. Pakistan has accused India of attempting to derail the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) through various means, including supporting insurgencies in Balochistan and attacks on Chinese interests in Pakistan. Closer India-Russia ties could embolden India in its efforts to counter CPEC, which is a flagship project of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The visit could also impact regional stability. If India and Russia align more closely on regional security issues, it might affect the security dynamics in South Asia, particularly concerning Afghanistan and the broader implications for counter-terrorism efforts. China, as Pakistan's closest ally, will be closely watching the developments from Modi's visit. Any shifts in the Russia-India relationship could influence China's strategic approach towards South Asia. If Russia and India strengthen their ties, China might reinforce its support for Pakistan to counterbalance India's influence. China's BRI projects, including CPEC, are critical to its global strategy. Any perceived threats to these projects from India's actions, potentially supported by stronger India-Russia relations, could prompt China to increase its economic and military support to Pakistan. Modi's visit might also influence Pakistan's diplomatic strategies. Pakistan may intensify its efforts to highlight India's alleged human rights violations in Kashmir and its involvement in terrorism in international forums. Additionally, Pakistan might seek to strengthen its alliances with other countries, including leveraging its relationships with China and potentially Russia, to counterbalance India's diplomatic moves. This visit may not only create additional challenges for Pakistan but may also create new opportunities therefore Pakistan should calibrate its foreign policy objectives, trade, investment, business and security strategies to effectively safeguard its interests and capitalize on new opportunities emerging from the current geopolitical landscape. Pakistan can consider a multi-faceted approach. Strengthening strategic alliances with China and Russia should be a priority. Deepening the strategic part-

nership with China, particularly through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), remains crucial. Additionally, enhancing relations with Russia, despite Modi's visit, can ensure that Pakistan continues to benefit from Russian defense and economic cooperation. Engaging in high-level diplomatic exchanges with both these major powers can solidify Pakistan's position in the region. Diversifying diplomatic engagements is another essential step. Strengthening ties with Central Asian countries can open new avenues for trade and energy cooperation, reducing economic dependency on any single country. Actively engaging with other major powers like Turkey, Iran, and the European Union can create a more balanced foreign policy, offering broader support. Participation in international forums such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) can help Pakistan build a broader base of international support. Economically, Pakistan should focus on boosting diversification and promoting foreign direct investment (FDI). Enhancing trade with regional partners and improving the business environment can attract more investment. Expanding and securing CPEC projects by highlighting their economic benefits and regional integration aspects can attract additional investment from countries in Central Asia and the Middle East. Investing in infrastructure improvements to support trade and logistics will make Pakistan a more attractive regional trade hub. In terms of security policy, enhancing counterterrorism cooperation through strengthened intelligence sharing with China and Russia is vital. Modernizing and training security forces can improve their capabilities in counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations. Engaging in regional security dialogues and initiatives, such as the SCO, can help in addressing regional stability and combating terrorism. Addressing domestic insurgencies with comprehensive strategies that include development programs, political dialogue, and targeted security operations can dismantle insurgent networks, ensuring greater internal stability.

—The writer is Former Press Secretary to the President Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France Former MD, SRBC

ASEAN; Brick in the BRICS

Dr M Ali Hamza



Malaysia, the sixth largest economy in Southeast Asia, announced its decision to join BRICS just one week after Thailand, the region's second largest economy after Indonesia, revealed plans to pursue BRICS membership later this year. Together, the economies of Thailand and Malaysia represent over \$1 trillion in GDP, which will be a significant

Two of Southeast Asia's key economies have announced plans to join the BRICS network. If you're not yet convinced that the BRICS alliance is rapidly transforming the geopolitical landscape, consider the words of Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim: "We can no longer accept the scenario where the West wants to control the discourse because the fact is they are not colonial powers anymore and independent countries should be free to express themselves." Each week, we see more stories of the developing world striving to break free from US dominance, seeking a more balanced and fair world. Malaysia, the sixth largest economy in Southeast Asia, announced its decision to join BRICS just one week after Thailand, the region's second largest economy after Indonesia, revealed plans to pursue BRICS membership later this year. Together, the economies of Thailand and Malaysia represent over \$1 trillion in GDP, which will be a significant addition to the BRICS alliance. However, the more crucial aspect is the larger geopolitical shift occurring behind the scenes that could reshape Asia's future. The biggest beneficiary of this new development will be China, due to the strategic importance of the Strait of Malacca. The Strait of Malacca, arguably the most crucial body of water globally, stretches over 800 KM and narrows to just 2.8 KM at its tightest point, making it one of the world's most congested shipping choke points. Annually, more than 94,000 vessels navigate these waters, with an astounding 25% of global trade passing through this strait. No country relies more on the Strait of Malacca than China, with over 80% of its oil imports traveling directly through these waters. Imagine a scenario where the US and China are drawn into a larger conflict. The US military wouldn't need to confront China's military directly; they could simply blockade Chinese shipping containers in the Strait of Malacca by securing cooperation with Malaysia. The real-world implications of such a blockade can be gleaned from the current Suez Canal crisis. In January, Iran-backed Houthi rebels seized control

of the Suez Canal, causing chaos in the shipping world in response to Israel's war in Gaza. This conflict resulted in a 50% drop in Suez Canal trade in the first two months of 2024, demonstrating the devastating impact a naval war in a strategic region can have. The disruption has forced shipping companies to revert to thousand-year-old trade routes, rerouting vessels around the Cape of Good Hope due to the heightened risk in the Suez Canal, where multiple ships have been sunk by the rebels. China is undoubtedly observing this situation closely and has been developing contingency plans in case of a conflict in the Strait of Malacca. In 2015, China launched the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). This project aims to build a network of roads and railways from China's western Xinjiang province all the way to the Arabian Sea. With a budget of nearly \$50 billion, CPEC would ensure China's access to Middle Eastern oil if the Strait of Malacca were ever blocked. However, given Pakistan's ongoing political, economic, and security concerns, the Chinese government recognizes the need for a backup plan and cannot rely solely on this option. China, the most dominant country in Asia, is determined to maintain its regional supremacy. Malaysia joining BRICS is just one aspect of China's broader strategy. For many years, China has been cultivating its reputation and strengthening relationships with ASEAN, the political and economic union of 10 Southeast Asian countries. Remarkably, China's trade with the ASEAN alliance surged from \$252 billion to \$523 billion—a 106% increase—since 2017. This growth has made ASEAN China's most important trading partner, with over 80% of these imports consisting of electronics, machinery, chemicals, plastics, aluminium, and other industrial goods. Despite all these developments, BRICS has yet to convince the largest economy in Southeast Asia, Indonesia, to join. However, Indonesia remains a key target for all five BRICS member governments. The potential value of Indonesia to BRICS is clear: it has the world's fourth largest

population, a rapidly growing economy with the potential to become one of the top five economies by 2045, and is located in a strategically important region where the United States and China compete for influence. Officially, President Jokowi Widodo's government states that it needs more time to evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of BRICS membership, particularly in the economic realm, and wishes to consult with its ASEAN partners. However, it's important to recognize that Indonesia's foreign policy has a long-standing tradition of non-alignment, keeping its options open. Joining BRICS would be interpreted by the West as a shift towards the Chinese camp, marking a significant change in Indonesia's hedging and issue-balancing policy, where Jakarta leans towards the United States on security matters and towards China on economic issues. This move would undermine the credibility of Indonesia's longstanding doctrine of "free and active". Additionally, given Indonesia's neutral stance on the Russia-Ukraine war, joining BRICS would likely exacerbate Western concerns. Indonesia cherishes its goal of being a "good global citizen." It expresses demands for reform in a conciliatory and accommodating manner, which allows it to maintain open dialogue with the Global North while advocating for the interests of the Global South. This moderation has led to invitations for Indonesia to speak as a guest at both the Western G7 and BRICS. In the fifteen years since its inception, BRICS has achieved notable milestones such as establishing the New Development Bank, a multilateral institution with \$50 billion (45.6 billion) in subscribed capital to finance infrastructure and climate projects in developing countries, and spearheading institutional reforms within the International Monetary Fund. Additionally, BRICS has effectively provided short-term liquidity through currency swaps and similar mechanisms. However, it still needs to assert itself as a prominent player on the global diplomatic and economic stage. While its summits have been frequent, they have not consistently yielded significant concrete outcomes. BRICS must enhance its appeal to attract countries like Indonesia to consider joining its ranks.

Briefs

Pakistan, Azerbaijan discuss \$2 billion...

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Iham Aliyev said the visit was a breakthrough and the two countries have always supported and cooperated with each other. He said we now engage in practical elements of cooperation like trade, energy, investment and corridors of transportation. Earlier on Thursday, An official welcome ceremony was held in Islamabad for Iham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, who is on a state visit to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. A guard of honor was arranged for the Azerbaijani President in the square decorated with the national flags of the two countries. President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Iham Aliyev was welcomed by Pakistan's Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. First, the President of Azerbaijan and the Pakistani Prime Minister posed for official photos. The national anthems of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan were played. The chief of the guard of honor reported to the Azerbaijani President. The President of Azerbaijan reviewed the guard of honor. The Pakistani delegation was introduced to President Iham Aliyev, while members of the Azerbaijani delegation were introduced to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Pakistan eyes LNG pipeline...

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desire to work closely with President Putin to strengthen their relations further. Currently, the two nations share a bilateral trade volume of \$800 to \$900 million annually, with plans to significantly increase this figure in the coming years. Senior officials disclosed that various ministries are conducting preliminary studies, with Petroleum Minister Musadik Malik tasked with evaluating viable options. These efforts must consider the sanctions imposed by the United States on both Russia and Iran. The relevant ministries are also assessing how to increase trade to \$20-\$25 billion per year, taking into account regional and global dynamics. Multiple routes for the LNG pipeline are being considered, as past efforts for regional energy connectivity, including power and gas projects, have not come to fruition despite significant promotion over recent decades. Russia's reduced trade with European countries—down by 70%—has prompted Moscow to seek new markets, including South Asia. This proposed LNG pipeline project revives a history of cooperation between Islamabad and Moscow. In 2015, the two countries agreed to build a 1,100-kilometer pipeline to transport imported LNG from Karachi to power plants in Punjab. Sources indicate that Islamabad is keen to proceed with the Russian LNG project without provoking the US. Various options are being explored to achieve a balanced outcome that benefits all parties involved.

'We know how to form and topple...'

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Directing the PPP Punjab leadership to collaborate in resolving internal issues, Zardari affirmed, "We are conducting a test of the people by taking IMF loans. The Muslim League (N) is not in power. We know how to form and dismantle governments. We will not abandon our people." He urged PPP workers to prepare for intensified efforts ahead, particularly in promoting youth leadership within the party's ranks. Zardari also called for a comprehensive report on the party's organizational structure, emphasizing the need to move beyond the politics of closed rooms and take proactive steps forward. Previously, President Asif Ali Zardari revealed the government's intention to impose taxes on agricultural income in alignment with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) conditions.

Watkins' late strikes fires England into Euro 2024 final

England to face Spain in Euro 2024 final on Sunday

SPORTS DESK

DORTMUND: Ollie Watkins struck a stunning injury-time winner as England beat the Netherlands 2-1 on Wednesday to set up a Euro 2024 final showdown with Spain in Berlin.

It was an incredible finish to an evening that began badly for England, as Xavi Simons gave the Netherlands an early lead in the semi-final in Dortmund. However, England were soon level through a Harry Kane penalty following a contentious VAR call by German referee Felix Zwayer, and the match looked set for extra time until Watkins struck. On for Kane, Watkins received a pass from fellow substitute Cole Palmer with his back to goal in the first minute of stoppage time, turned and fired low into the far corner to leave the Netherlands bewildered. "I'm lost for words really," said Watkins, the Aston Villa striker. "I don't think I've hit a ball that sweet before, and obviously in such a special moment." It has rarely been a convincing campaign from Gareth Southgate's England side, but they are through to their second consecutive European Championship final as they dream of finally winning a first major trophy since 1966. To do that they will surely have to perform better than at any point so far in Germany as they face an outstanding Spain team, who beat France 2-1 on Tuesday. "We play the team who've been the best team in the tournament and we have a day less to prepare so it's a huge task. But we're still here and we're fighting," Southgate said. The Netherlands had been hoping to repeat their triumph at the last



Euros in Germany, in 1988, but their current side lacks anyone with the star quality of Marco van Basten or Ruud Gullit. A victory for them would have seen this Euro conclude with the same final as the 2010 World Cup. Instead they now go home. "I am disappointed about the final result in a

match which started really good for us," said their coach, Ronald Koeman. "A great goal, and then it's over, and that is difficult to accept." England had got to this stage despite not winning any of their last four matches in 90 minutes, and having been taken to extra time by Slovakia and

Switzerland. That might have given the Dutch an edge physically, after the Oranje shrugged off finishing third in their group to brush aside Romania and see off Turkey. England welcomed back Marc Guehi in defence after suspension, while Koeman opted to start Donnyell Malen in attack

on the ground where he plays club football for Borussia Dortmund. The Westfalenstadion is a special place for the Dutch, as the scene of their 2-0 win over Brazil, with goals by Johan Neeskens and Johan Cruyff, that took them through to the 1974 World Cup final.

44,000 Afghans in Pak still awaiting US, foreign resettlement

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at her press briefing, reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to provide political, diplomatic, and moral support to our Kashmiri people for the just and peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions. She told the media that the 93rd 'Youm-e-Shuhada-e-Kashmir' (Kashmir Martyrs Day) would be observed on July 13 to honor the martyrdom of 22 Kashmiris who sacrificed their lives in Srinagar in 1931, bravely facing the indiscriminate firing of Dogra

forces under the former Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir. "We salute their courage, which ignited a determined movement for the rights and freedoms of the Kashmiri people and their right to self-determination. This movement continues to this day." She mentioned that akin to the Dogra forces, Indian forces have killed thousands of Kashmiris over recent decades simply for advocating their rights. "Burhan Muzaffar Wani, an iconic youth leader from Kashmir, was among the hundreds who fell victim to extrajudicial killings in IIOJK. His eighth martyrdom anniversary

was observed on July 8th," she remarked. Commenting on Israeli aggression, she said Pakistan strongly condemned this week's indiscriminate attacks by Israeli occupation forces on four schools in Gaza, which resulted in the massacre of dozens of women and children seeking shelter there. These attacks are further evidence of Israel's genocidal campaign against the people of Gaza. The indiscriminate targeting of civilian populations and facilities is a grave violation of international law and constitutes war crimes. With its latest actions, Israeli occupation forces have once again demonstrated their contempt for international law and the basic tenets of decency and acceptable international behaviour, she said. These flagrant violations of international

humanitarian law must not be permitted to become the new norm. "We call on the international community to take urgent measures to bring an immediate end to Israel's campaign of terror and the genocidal campaign against the Palestinian people. The time has come to hold Israel accountable for its crimes and its flagrant violations of international humanitarian and human rights law." She told the media that Pakistan and Azerbaijan will engage in wide-ranging discussions on areas of mutual interest to further strengthen their bilateral strategic cooperation during the two-day official visit of President Iham Aliyev of Azerbaijan. She stated that President Iham Aliyev arrived in Pakistan for a two-day official visit.

Wasim hopes India will play Champions Trophy in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan skipper Wasim Akram hoped on Thursday that India will visit Pakistan for the ICC Champions Trophy, slated to happen next year in February. According to details, Akram who is widely deemed as the "Sultan of Swing" said: "The entire Pakistan is waiting to welcome India in Pakistan. Hopefully, India will visit Pakistan to play the Champions Trophy." "The facilities here in Pakistan for the Champions Trophy are good and the stadiums are being revamped. Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi ad started the process of developing the stadiums for the megaveent." "I feel that this will be the massive tournament and turn out to be quite vital for Pakistan for the betterment of the country," Akram added. Akram said: "I am having that belief that all the teams will visit Pakistan to play the Champions Trophy." He stressed the need for detaching the politics and cricket from each other. "I would like to say to all the teams, fans and media that come and see that the facilities here are so good," Akram maintained.—APP

Govt 'decides to initiate national...'

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Last month, the federal cabinet approved the decisions taken by the National Action Plan's Central Apex Committee including the launch of Operation Azm-e-Istehkam. The sources say that the security forces handed over the cleared areas from the terrorists to the provincial governments. "Due to the failure of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, terrorists returned to the cleared areas," the added. The government's decision drew reservations from several political parties including the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F), the Awami National Party (ANP), Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and others. In response, the Centre has maintained that "no large-scale military operation is being launched" in the country which might result in mass evictions and has reassured that the matter will be brought before the parliament. PM Shehbaz has also decided to convene an all-parties conference (APC) to evolve consensus on the operation with PTI founder Imran Khan supporting the initiative, saying his party would attend the government-hosted huddle. Meanwhile, the Pakistan Army has also denounced the undue criticism against the newly launched anti-terrorism operation stating that the "vision" was being misrepresented deliberately for "vested interests". The military's media wing said the new operation is aimed at harnessing the national counter-terrorism efforts in a synchronised manner to dismantle the nexus of terrorism and illegal spectrum in the country for enduring stability and economic prosperity. "Forum noted with concern the unwarranted criticism by some quarters and deliberate misrepresentation of the vision, only for furthering their vested interests," the ISPR had said. Pakistan has witnessed a significant surge in terrorist attacks in recent months resulting in scores of both civilian and security forces' casualties.

Pak 'agrees' to slap tax...

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the IMF by July 12. The sources further said that the tax on agriculture income will be slapped from yearly income of Rs600,000. Subject to signing of the new agreement, the sources said that the global lender has set the October 2024 deadline to amend the existing provincial laws to bring them at par with the federal income tax law. The IMF has also asked for rescinding any income tax exemption for the livestock sector by October this year.

UNHCR...

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proud tradition of hospitality continues," said UNHCR's Representative in Pakistan, Philippa Candler. Candler acknowledged and commended the country for hosting Afghans for many decades amid their own challenges. "The people of Pakistan have long shown solidarity and compassion towards those displaced and in need.

Power and glory as Rybakina eyes Wimbledon final

LONDON: Elena Rybakina can move closer to a second Wimbledon title on Thursday when she faces Barbora Krejickova armed with one of the All England Club's deadliest serves. Krejickova is in her first Wimbledon semi-final as are Jasmine Paolini and Donna Vekic, who contest Thursday's other tie. AFP Sport looks at the two semi-finals. Rybakina aims for repeat success Elena Rybakina, the 2022 champion, is the overwhelming favourite to sweep to a second title at the All England Club. The Russian-born Kazakh, seeded fourth, has hit a joint tournament best of 31 aces and has dropped serve just six times. The 1.83 metre (6 feet) Rybakina has launched 134 winners and spent only six hours and 14 minutes on court through five rounds. Gauff hails depth in women's tennis despite Wimbledon exit "Of course I have such amazing memories from 2022 and I'm just enjoying every time I step on the court, especially when I play good. It's just really amazing," she said. Krejickova, the French Open champion in 2021, has spent more than three hours more on court than Rybakina in getting to her first Wimbledon semi-final. The 28-year-old played the longest women's match of the tournament in the first round, three hours and 14 minutes, to see off Veronika Kudermetova. Such resilience would have been difficult to imagine earlier this year, when Krejickova was laid low by injury an illness. She also went winless between February and June. "It was a very, very difficult period," said the Czech 31st seed. Paolini, Vekic break new ground Before this season, Paolini appeared destined to spend her career on the fringes of the women's game, a top-30 player making a comfortable living but short of stardom. In 16 appearances at the Grand Slams she had failed to get past the second round. However, that changed with a fourth-round run at the Australian Open, a first WTA 1,000-level title in Dubai and a runner-up spot at the French Open. Now the 28-year-old, who stands at a modest 1.63 metres, is in the semi-finals of Wimbledon, having never won a grass-court match until last month. "I didn't realise before, but my coach was telling me that I could play well here. I wasn't believing too much," said the modest seventh-ranked Italian. Paolini has thrived in her return game at Wimbledon, breaking serve 28 times. However, that skill could be tested against Vekic, who has hit 28 aces through five rounds. The 28-year-old Vekic is in her first Grand Slam semi-final in her 43rd attempt. Vekic has plenty of experience on her coaching staff in the shape of Pam Shriver, a three-time semi-finalist in the 1980s.—APP

SC orders 'humane treatment'...

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meetings, appeared before the court. During the proceedings, lawyer Latif Khosa highlighted a case where a detainee was not allowed to meet his family, resulting in him missing the funeral of his five-year-old child. Justice Irfan Saadat emphasized to the Attorney General that the inhumane treatment of detainees is unacceptable. Following this, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar questioned the discontinuation of the weekly family visits for detainees, stating, "You previously stated that detainees could meet their families every week. Why has this practice stopped?" Meanwhile, The Supreme Court will announce its much-awaited verdict today (Friday) at 12:00 pm on a case related to the denial of reserved seats to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC), according to a cause list issued on Thursday. The development came after the apex court's full bench held its second round of consultation on the reserved seats case verdict for the second consecutive day on Thursday. A special session of the country's top court's 13-member full bench was held under the chair of CJP QaziFaez Isa, the sources said, adding all the judges of the bench attended the session.

Fin Min calls for overhaul...

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the tax-loaded Rs18.877 trillion budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 (FY25) last month, aimed at shoring up public revenue and satisfying the IMF, which has repeatedly demanded improved tax collection. The budget aims to raise Rs13 trillion by next July, a roughly 40% increase from the current financial year, to bring down a ruinous debt burden that has caused 57% of government revenue to be swallowed by interest payments. The tax rises mostly fall on salaried workers, who comprise a relatively small part of Pakistan's mostly informal economy, as well as some retail and export businesses. The budget also threatened punitive measures for tax avoiders, including restrictions on mobile phones, gas and electricity access and the ability to fly abroad. On Sunday, the finance minister warned that Pakistan won't be able to break lose from IMF bailouts if it fails to boost tax revenue. The minister in today's briefing expressed hope to bring all the sectors into the tax net, saying that everyone will be made a filer as per Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's directives.

Flour shortage...

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up to 5.5%, the flour mills association leaders have said, making the product more expensive. Pakistan Flour Mills Association (PFMA) Central Senior Vice Chairman had said that the authorities had also asked the mills to collect another 2.5% and 2% withholding tax on the sale of flour from non-filer retailers and wholesalers, respectively. Meanwhile, PFMA Chairman Asim Raza reiterated that the mills would not bear the responsibility of collecting the withholding tax as it made the flour dearer by Rs200. The PFMA said at least 1,725 flour mills had ceased their operation across the country, including 1,100 in Punjab, 300 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, more than 300 in Sindh and 25 in Balochistan.

Court order reveals...

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PTI workers to attack military installations, government properties, and police officials to compel the government and armed forces to release him. Moreover, on May 9, 2023, before leaving for Islamabad, Imran Khan sent a video message warning that the country's situation would deteriorate like Sri Lanka if he were arrested. The order also noted that Imran Khan's statements were widely disseminated via PTI's official Twitter account, urging PTI workers to protest, labeling it as a "real jihad for real freedom."

Shaheen Afridi's 'heated argument' with coach revealed

Shaheen got upset after Yousuf pointed out too many no-balls during practice session at Headingley, say sources

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan cricket team's fast bowler Shaheen Afridi had heated arguments with batting coach Mohammad Yousuf during Pakistan's tour to England, just before the World Cup.

A day after reports from Lahore suggested that coaches and management has complained to the chairman PCB over Shaheen's attitude during recent tour, it has been emerged that Afridi, in fact, had exchanged heated words with Yousuf, but had later said sorry to him. Multiple sources within Pakistan cricket team management has confirmed to Geo News that the issue was "heat-of-the-moment" and it was sort-



ed out immediately and there was nothing to report about it. Recalling the incident, a source told Geo News that while Afridi was bowling in nets at Headingley, Mohammad Yousuf – who was the batting coach with the team on tour of Ireland and England – had pointed towards his no-balls. Upon being called out for bowling no-balls repeatedly, Shaheen got furious – and this is the point where it started. "Shaheen said to Mohammad Yousuf to let him do what he was doing and he [Yousuf] should mind his own business," said a source adding that Yousuf responded to Shaheen that he was a coach and doing his job. The source added that the argument got heated-up. Later-on, the senior manager Wahab Riaz had reprimanded Shaheen Afridi on his attitude,

Shaheen had accepted his mistake and had said sorry to the former batting legend. "This was nothing more than routine case of heat-of-the-moment, so the chapter was closed there and then," said the source when asked why it wasn't reported to the PCB. Reports on Wednesday said that Shaheen's behavior with coaches and management wasn't good during the recent tours. The source was, when asked, said that he was not aware of any other incident involving Shaheen Afridi. "See, when you are on a tour for months, these minor heated arguments happen, these are routine matters, there was nothing big as far as I know which required any strict action against anyone," a source close to team's dug-out told this correspondent.

Briefs

6 killed in record southwest China rain

BEIJING: Six people were killed as record rains struck southwest China, state media reported Thursday, as the country endures a summer of extreme weather. Torrential downpours struck Dianjiang county, near the megacity of Chongqing, from Wednesday night to Thursday morning, state news agency Xinhua said, citing county officials. State broadcaster CCTV, citing the county flood control office, reported that four people had died in "geological disasters" and a further two had "drowned" as of 1:50 pm (0550 GMT) on Thursday. Xinhua said one of the people had perished after a house collapsed, and at least three had been caught in a landslide. Nearly 7,000 people have been affected by rainstorms and 170 have been told to evacuate, according to Xinhua. It added that up to 254.6 millimetres (10 inches) of rain had been measured in parts of Dianjiang, the highest daily maximum since records began. China is enduring a summer of extreme weather, with heavy rains across the east and south coming as much of the north has sweltered in successive heat waves. —DNA

Myanmar junta 'trying to destroy country'

BANGKOK: Myanmar's junta appears to be "trying to destroy a country it cannot control," the UN special rapporteur to the country warned on Thursday. Clashes between an alliance of ethnic minority armed groups and the military have shredded a Beijing-brokered truce in January. The ceasefire had briefly halted widespread fighting in the northern part of the Southeast Asian nation since a military coup ended democratic rule in 2021. "The junta is on its heels, it's losing troops, it's losing military facilities, it is literally losing ground," UN special rapporteur Tom Andrews said during a briefing to the national security body of neighboring Thailand. "It almost appears as if the Junta is trying to destroy a country that it cannot control." The military's response to its losses has been to attack civilians, he said, adding there had been a substantial increase in the number of attacks on schools, hospitals and monasteries in the last six months. "The stakes are very very high." Ethnic minority fighters seized a town from the military along a key trade highway to China's Yunnan province earlier this week after days of clashes. The northern Shan state has been rocked by fighting since late last month, when an alliance of ethnic armed groups renewed an offensive against the military. —APP

UN vows to fight increasing sand, dust storms

UNITED NATIONS: The United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday dedicated a decade, from 2025 to 2034, to combating increasing sand and dust storms—extreme weather conditions that pose serious environmental, economic, and human risks. Acting by consensus, the 193-member Assembly adopted the draft resolution titled "United Nations Decade on Combating Sand and Dust Storms (2025-2034)" thus dedicating the 10-year period to the fight against those meteorological phenomena. By other terms of the text, the Assembly invited the UN Secretary-General to take appropriate steps to plan and organize the activities of the Decade at the global, regional and country levels. It also stressed that the cost of all activities that may arise from implementation of the resolution should be met from voluntary contributions, including from the private sector. Presiding over the session was the General Assembly President, Dennis Francis. —APP

Bosnia marks 29th anniversary of 1995 Srebrenica genocide

14 more newly identified victims of Srebrenica genocide to be laid to rest in memorial cemetery in village of Potocari

NEWS DESK

SARAJEVO: Bosnian Muslims remembered the victims of the 1995 Srebrenica genocide on Thursday, the first time since the U.N.'s newly established a memorial day to commemorate the massacre. On July 11, 1995, Bosnian Serb forces captured the eastern Bosnian town — which was then a U.N.-protected enclave — and killed 8,000 Muslim men and boys in the following days. It was the worst massacre in Europe since World War II and has been ruled a genocide by two international courts. "It's hard when July comes. They ended up like this only because they had a different (Muslim) name," said Mevlida Hasanovic as she prayed at the tomb of her cousin, who was 18 when he was killed. Hasanovic lost a dozen male relatives in the massacre including her father and husband, whose grave is next to her cousin's. His remains were buried on two occasions since they were found in two different mass graves. The 54-year-old woman is still looking for the remains of a brother to be found, "at least one bone," to bury him, she told Agence France-Presse (AFP). "Their souls know that we are here next to them. When I get here, I feel as if we just parted ways in Srebrenica." In May, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution declaring July 11 the "International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica." The resolution was fiercely opposed by Serbia and



Bosnian Serbs, who continue to play down the crime. Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Dodik has repeat-

edly denied a genocide occurred and says his administration would not recognize the resolution. A



U.N. court sentenced Bosnian Serb wartime political leader Ra-

donovan Karadzic and his army chief Ratko Mladic to life in prison for war crimes including the Srebrenica genocide. Bosnia's 1992-1995 war between its Croats, Muslims and Serbs claimed approximately 100,000 lives. Nearly three decades after the war ended, the Balkan nation remains deeply divided along ethnic lines. New burial On Thursday, the remains of 14 more victims of the bloodshed, including a 17-year-old boy, will be buried at a memorial cemetery in Potocari, just outside Srebrenica. Beriz Mujic, whose remains were found in the Srebrenica region last year, will be laid to rest next to his brother Hazim.

11 people killed in Philippine road crash

MANILA: Eleven members of a family returning home from a wake died Thursday when their pick-up truck collided with a passenger bus in the northern Philippines, police said. The accident happened shortly after midnight at an intersection in Abulug municipality in Cagayan province. The Toyota Hilux carrying 14 people reached an intersection with a major highway and hit the bus, police said. Only three people in the pick-up survived, police Major Antonio Palattao said. There were no fatalities on the passenger bus, but the driver and conductor were seriously hurt and 23 others suffered minor injuries, he said. "The driver of the Toyota Hilux is not well-oriented with the area and was not aware they were already approaching a highway," police Captain Jun-jun Torio said. "Naturally, you slow down when approaching one." Deadly road accidents are common in the Philippines, where drivers frequently flout the rules and vehicles are often poorly maintained or overloaded. —APP

S. Korea names K-pop group tourism ambassadors

SEOUL: South Korea on Thursday appointed K-pop girl band NewJeans "honorary ambassadors" as part of a drive to promote tourism, joining a long list of Korean celebrities to take up the role. South Korea has seen tourism figures recover to nearly pre-pandemic levels this year, with around a third of visitors citing K-pop or K-drama — the so-called "Hallyu" or Korean wave — as a major motive for travelling to the East Asian country. "We are very happy to be appointed as an ambassador to promote South Korean tourism today," band member Minji said, adding it would be a "great joy" for the supergroup to promote their country's charms. Tourist arrivals are at "about 90 percent of pre-pandemic levels," said culture minister Yu In-chon. "With NewJeans as tourism ambassadors, I expect even more people from all over the world to visit Korea," he added. The group will serve as ambassadors with no actual diplomatic responsibilities for a year, succeeding previous representatives such as "Squid Game" star and Emmy-winner Lee Jung-jae and K-pop megastars BTS. Members of the band shared their personal recommendations for visitors, including eating "gimbap dipped in tteokbokki sauce" and taking "a photo a day", which is an "unspoken rule among young Korean generations". Haerin said she recommended tourists to visit a hanok — or traditional Korean house — while Hanni urged visitors to embrace Korean cuisine. "You have to eat Korean food when you come to Korea, and since it's summer and the weather is hot, if you eat food like samgye-tang (ginseng chicken soup) or mul-naengmyeon (cold buckwheat noodles), you'll be able to enjoy it a lot," she said. —APP

Pakistan embassy hosts "Cultural Diversity" art exhibition in Belarus

DNA

MINSK: The Embassy of Pakistan in Minsk, in collaboration with the Museum of History of Private Collections in Vitebsk, opened the art exhibition on the theme "Cultural Diversity and Landscapes of Pakistan." The opening ceremony was attended by approximately 100 guests, including cultural enthusiasts, art lovers, media representatives, and expatriate Pakistanis. The exhibition was inaugurated by the Ambassador of Pakistan to Belarus, H.E. Sajjad Haider Khan, Tatiana Starinskaya, Director of the Vitebsk Regional Museum, and Piotr Podgurskiy, Head of the Cultural Department of the Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee.



Over fifty art pieces by prominent Pakistani artists, including Amir Kamal, Ayesha Kamal, Erum Ashfaq, and Farheen Kanwal, are on display in the exhibition. Additionally, a diverse range of artifacts, including truck artwork, onyx, brass items, and salt lamps, are being showcased, reflecting the vibrant arts and crafts of

Pakistan. In his welcoming speech, Ambassador Khan highlighted the rich and diverse cultural heritage of Pakistan, describing it as a multicultural, multilingual, and religiously diverse society. He mentioned Pakistan as home to some of the most sacred religious places for Sikh, Buddhist, and Hindu communities, alongside nu-

merous churches, mosques, and shrines that reflect a heritage of coexistence and mutual respect. The Ambassador also highlighted Pakistan's breathtaking landscapes, from the towering peaks of the Karakoram and Himalayas in the north to the serene beaches of the Arabian Sea in the south. He expressed his gratitude to the talented artists from Pakistan whose exceptional works are featured in the exhibition and thanked the Belarusian government for their unwavering support in holding the exhibition. This is the fourth year of Pakistan's consecutive participation in the annual Slavianski Bazaar in Vitebsk, considered one of the most famous festivals in the country. The exhibition will last until August 15, 2024.

Rwandan troops in DRC supporting M23 rebels

KIGALI: Between 3,000 and 4,000 Rwandan government forces are deployed in neighbouring eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), operating alongside the M23 rebel group which has been making major advances, UN experts have said in a report. The Rwandan forces' "de facto control and direction over M23 operations also renders Rwanda liable for the actions of M23," the panel of experts said in the 293-page report to the UN Security Council on Wednesday. The experts called the estimate of Rwandan troops "conservative" and said their "systematic support and presence" supporting M23 in its territorial conquest is a sanctionable act, and their deployment is a violation of DRC's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Eastern DRC has struggled with armed violence as more than 120 groups fight for power, land and valuable mineral resources, while others try to defend their communities. Some armed groups have been accused of mass killings. DRC's President Felix Tshisekedi, along with US and UN experts, have accused Rwanda of giving military backing to M23. Rwanda denies the claim, but in February it effectively admitted that it has troops and missile systems in eastern DRC to safeguard its security, pointing to a buildup of Congolese forces near the border. The M23 rebels are largely Congolese ethnic Tutsis, who became prominent when their fighters seized Goma, eastern DRC's largest city on the border with Rwanda, in November 2012. —APP

Ugandan TikTok star jailed for insulting president

KAMPALA: A 24-year-old Ugandan man has been sentenced to six years in prison for using his TikTok account to spread hate speech and malicious information against President Yoweri Museveni, first lady Janet Museveni and their son. Entebbe Chief Magistrate Court's Presiding Chief Magistrate, Stella-Maris Amabilis, delivered the sentence Wednesday following the arrest of Edward Awabwa, who used his account under the name "Save Media Uganda" to share a video clip in which he hurled insults against the first family. According to Kampala Metropolitan Deputy Police Spokesperson Luke Owoyesigire, between February and March 2024, Awabwa used TikTok to share information ridiculing the president. His imprisonment comes in the wake of a sustained campaign by security agencies targeting individuals who use social media to insult senior government officials. Awabwa joins a list of content creators who have been jailed for spreading "malicious information" and "hate speech" under the Computer Misuse Act of 2022, which criminalized some internet activities despite concerns that the law could curtail online freedom of expression. Human rights activists challenged the law in the Constitutional Court, arguing that it was repressive. The law on computer misuse defines offensive communication as the "willful and repeated use of electronic communication to disturb or attempt to disturb the peace, quiet, or right of privacy of any person with no purpose of legitimate communication whether or not a conversation ensues." —Agencies



NEW YORK: Malik Sohail Hussain - Chairman Coordination FPCCI presenting FPCCI crest on behalf of Atif Ikram Sheikh - President FPCCI to Mr. Aamer Ahmed Atozai - Consul General of Pakistan in New York at the Consulate General of Islamic Republic of Pakistan in New York City. Also present is Adnan Mahmood Awan (Trade & Investment Counselor at Consulate General of Pakistan - New York). — DNA

Spanish PM calls for NATO unity on Gaza as in Ukraine

Sanchez stressed the importance of a consistent political stance, emphasizing international law for both countries

FOREIGN DESK

MADRID: Speaking at a NATO summit, Spain's prime minister urged the alliance partners to show the same "unity and consistency" on Gaza as they have demonstrated on Ukraine. "We cannot be accused of applying double standards that would weaken our support for Ukraine. On the contrary, we demand the same unity and consistency for Gaza as we do in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine," Pedro Sanchez told fellow NATO heads of state or government at an Atlantic Council session held in Washington, according to Spanish press reports based on sources from the prime minister's office. He stressed: "It is important for our citizens to understand that we have a consistent political stance and that

there are no double standards. "If we're telling our people that we support Ukraine because we defend international law, we must do the same for Gaza. If we demand respect for international law in Ukraine, we must demand it in Gaza as well." Sanchez is attending NATO's 75th anniversary summit, which is set to conclude later Thursday. With Israel accused of war crimes in Gaza at international courts, as well as by many countries and global watchdogs, Western countries have been accused of hypocrisy in continuing to support Israel's offensive while condemning Russia's alleged atrocities in Ukraine. Israel's nine-month offensive has taken over 38,000 lives while injuring at least 88,000 others, while its tight blockade on food, water, and aid shipments has resulted in famine conditions throughout

Gaza, according to the UN and other international observers. Israel has also attacked schools, hospitals, and houses of worship, all civilian facilities off limits to attacks under the laws of war. Meanwhile, Israel's order for people to leave Gaza City "will only fuel mass suffering for Palestinian families", many of whom have been displaced multiple times, the UN relief coordination office, OCHA, has warned. The directive, issued by the Israeli military, follows evacuation orders affecting several parts of the city in recent days. These civilians must be protected — and their essential needs must be met, whether they flee or stay," OCHA said. "This is what we mean when we say that all parties must respect international humanitarian law, at all times." The situation is unfolding as a new round of

negotiations towards a ceasefire in Gaza resumed in Doha, Qatar, on Wednesday. "We're obviously following these developments very closely. The Secretary-General is being kept informed," said UN Spokesperson Stephane Dujarric, speaking at UN Headquarters in New York. "Our message to the parties is to find the political courage to reach this deal — for the sake of the people of Gaza, for the sake of the people of Israel, for the sake of hostages, to make this deal." Meanwhile, the UN and partners continue efforts to support displaced communities across Gaza. OCHA noted, however that the evacuation orders "are also forcing the humanitarian community to reset their aid operations over and over again." Aid workers are responding, but what they can deliver falls far short of needs,"

UN Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Muhannad Hadi, said on Wednesday in a post on the social media platform X, formerly Twitter. He stressed that more funding is urgently needed — as is a safe, enabling environment inside Gaza. Hadi visited Deir Al-Balah on Tuesday, where he witnessed firsthand the consequences of the breakdown in public order and safety as he entered and exited the Kerem Shalom crossing. OCHA reported, "He saw groups of men with sticks waiting for trucks to leave the Kerem Shalom crossing into Gaza. All trucks he passed were badly damaged, with broken windshields, mirrors and hoods," the agency added. The Humanitarian Coordinator also observed bags of fortified flour from the World Food Programme (WFP) and UN agency assisting Palestine refugees (UNRWA) scattered alongside the road coming out of Kerem Shalom.

11 injured in Poland coal mine accident

WARSAW: A quake hitting a coal mine in southern Poland left at least 11 miners injured and dozens still underground waiting to be rescued, local authorities said on Thursday. So far, around 30 people have managed to get to the surface. Twenty of them were taken to hospital in stable condition, according to Lukasz Pach, director of the Provincial Emergency Medical Service in Katowice. There are more than 10 rescue teams on site and the rescue is still going on. The Polish Mining Group, which owns the mine, said that there were 68 people in the affected area at the time of the quake. The coal mine is one of the oldest in Silesia, southern Poland. —APP

Briefs

Pezeshkian declares unshakable support for Palestine

TEHRAN: Iranian President-Elect Masoud Pezeshkian assured the Palestinian nation and resistance forces of his administration's "unwavering support in the struggle against the Zionist regime." This came in a letter to Hamas chief Ismail Haneyya, thanking him for the congratulatory message on his election victory. Pezeshkian assured Haneyya that Iran will keep supporting the Palestinian nation and its struggle against the occupation and the apartheid Zionist regime as a humanitarian and Islamic duty. The Islamic Republic will continue to offer unwavering support for the oppressed Palestinian people until the full restoration of their rights, fulfillment of their goals, and the liberation of Jerusalem, the president-elect stated. He also expressed confidence that Palestine will be the ultimate victor in light of the historic resistance shown by the people of Palestine and Gaza and the heroic efforts made by the resistance fighters in the ongoing war against the Israeli regime. — Agencies

Free solar panel announced for KP citizens

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government announced to provide free solar panels to 100,000 needy households in the province. In an interview to a foreign media outlet, Advisor to the Chief Minister on Finance, Muzammil Aslam said that the provincial government would also provide a complete setup of two kilowatt including batteries, DC fans and inverters. Muzammil Aslam said that a total of 100,000 households will be provided with free solar panel setup. The CM Advisor on Finance said that the provincial government has established more than 90 power plants. Muzammil Aslam said that the electricity is being generated at Rs 6 to Rs 7 per unit in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, adding that the same is being provided at Rs 27 per unit by the WAPDA.

It is pertinent to mention here that Punjab and Sindh governments had already announced to give solar panels to the people of their respective provinces. The Sindh government on May 29 announced to provide affordable electricity to over 200,000 households in the province. Syed Murad Ali Shah-led Sindh government in collaboration with the World Bank will provide a complete solar system to each household for Rs. 7,000.

Issue of IPPs under consideration, says energy minister

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister of Energy Awaish Leghari on Thursday said that the issue of the IPPs has been under consideration. Talking to media, Awaish Leghari said that the issue of the independent power producers (IPPs) being seen from various angles. "We are seeing, how much time of an IPP is remaining," he said.

"We also seeing, how much benefit or loss given by an IPP and what mechanism required to remove an expensive power producer and what price we have to pay for it," energy minister said. "Can we bear the price of removing the IPPs," he questioned. Pakistan's energy minister said that "We will reach to a decision soon under the instructions of the prime minister," he said. He said the power tariff for all consumers will go down after January. "I could not issue statements like Sheikh Rashid," the minister replied when a media person asked about the future of the IPPs.

Mediators have not yet provided updates on talks, says Hamas

GMO condemns Israel's prohibition of aid entry into Gaza for 65 days

NEWS DESK

CAIRO: Hamas said in a statement on Thursday that mediators have not yet provided the group with any updates regarding Gaza ceasefire negotiations. It also accused Israel of "stalling" to gain time and thwart the current round of talks. "The occupation continues its policy of stalling to buy time to foil this round of negotiations, as it has done in previous rounds," the Islamist faction added. The Hamas comments come as Qatari and Egyptian mediators, backed by the United States, have stepped up efforts this week to conclude a ceasefire deal aimed at ending the nine-month war in Gaza and releasing Israeli hostages held by Hamas and many Palestinians jailed in Israel. Meanwhile, As the US-backed Israeli genocidal war on the Gaza Strip entered day 279 on Thursday, aerial and artillery strikes continued to pound and target different areas and massacre more civilians, especially in northern Gaza. Reporters for the Palestinian Information Center (PIC) said that the Israeli occupation army continued to bomb homes and attack citizens in different areas of Gaza during the past 24 hours. The Israeli forces have continued their ground invasion of large neighborhoods in Rafah, since May 7, while storming the Gaza City amid air and artillery bombardment. On Thursday morning, Israeli aircraft launched a series of air strikes targeting the upper floors of buildings and residential towers in the vicinity of

50 Palestinians killed in the past 24 hours

GAZA: The health ministry in Gaza said on Thursday that the Israeli occupation army committed two massacres in the Gaza Strip during the past 24 hours, killing at least 50 citizens and injuring 54 others. The Ministry added that the death toll from the ongoing Israeli aggression, which started on October 7 last year, climbed to 38,345 martyrs and the number of the wounded surged to 88,295 people. "A number of victims are still under the rubble and on the roads as ambulance and civil defense crews have been prevented by Israeli occupation forces from approaching them," it added. Since October 7, 2023, the Israeli occupation army has launched a devastating war on the Gaza Strip resulting in tens of thousands of martyrs, wounded and missing, in addition to the displacement of two million people and a massive destruction in homes and infrastructures, which affected more than 70% of the buildings, amid a tight siege, a suffocating humanitarian crisis, and an unprecedented famine, especially in Gaza and northern Gaza. — Agencies

Ansar Roundabout, west of Gaza City. The Israeli forces also opened heavy fire in the vicinity of the Al-Rimal and the Al-Sabra neighborhoods in Gaza City. Local residents reported that several people were killed in an Israeli attack on a group of people trying to search for food in the vicinity of the university college south of Gaza City. The Israeli forces also blew up more residential buildings in the center of Rafah. The Israeli forces also targeted agricultural land in the vicinity of Al-Far Cemetery in the Al-Zaafaran area, east of Al-Maghazi camp, amid intensive air raids. Meanwhile, a house was set on fire due to the heavy Israeli bombing in Nuseirat in the central Gaza Strip. On the other hand, Israeli

warboats opened fire off the shores of the Al-Zahraa area and the Nuseirat camp, in conjunction with artillery shelling. Meanwhile, The Government Media Office (IOF) in Gaza condemned the ongoing Israeli and US administration's prohibition of the entry of humanitarian aid, medical supplies, and goods into the Gaza Strip for 65 days in a row. In a statement on Wednesday, the Media Office declared that the prevention of aid, coupled with the silence and complicity of numerous countries, constitutes a "grave humanitarian crime." The statement stressed that the ongoing blockade endangers the lives of thousands of children, patients, and civilians, leaving their fate hanging in the balance. It added

that hundreds of thousands of tons of aid and medical supplies remain piled up on the other side of Gaza's crossings, awaiting permission for entry. The statement further noted that the blockade itself is a crime, reflecting a moral decline as various countries align themselves with Israel and its immoral actions, contributing to the humanitarian disaster in Gaza. The GMO's statement held the international community responsible for the blockade, urging immediate action to halt the policy of starvation, which it described as part of an ongoing genocide committed by the Israeli occupation with support from the United States. This blockade, it stated, has been targeting civilians, children, women, patients, and the starving population for ten consecutive months. It called on the international community, the United Nations, various international organizations, Arab and Muslim countries, and all countries of the world to "break their scandalous silence and put pressure on Israel and the US administration in order to stop the crime of genocide, open the crossings, and bring in aid and medical supplies immediately before it is too late." The GMO concluded by saying, "The escalation of the Israeli starvation policy against our Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip will have a disastrous impact on the entire region, especially since it conflicts with all international laws, conventions and treaties that prohibit and criminalize the use of the starvation policy as a weapon of war, which is also a crime against humanity."

MoFA's consular office in Islamabad closed today

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The consular office at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad will be closed on Friday (today), 12 July 2024, due to security arrangements for the visit of a foreign dignitary. In a statement released on Thursday, the Ministry announced that while the Islamabad consular office will be temporarily closed, the Liaison Offices in Gujrat, Lahore, Karachi, Quetta, and Peshawar will remain open to provide in-person consular services. To minimize inconvenience, the Ministry has also established courier service collection points for apostille document submission and collection in Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi. The public is encouraged to utilize these facilities to avoid long queues. "We regret any inconvenience caused by the temporary closure of the consular office in Islamabad," said a spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Normal consular services will resume promptly on Monday, 15 July 2024."



ISLAMABAD: A view of portraits of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, and President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari displayed on a green alongside a road in the Federal Capital. President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev is arrived in Islamabad on July 11 for a two-day official visit to Pakistan at the invitation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. — Online

Verdicts pronounced in anger lead to travesty of justice

Says time spent in Saqib Nisar's chamber helped him a lot during his initial days of practice

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD (Dunya News) – Chief Justice Islamabad High Court, Justice Aamer Farooq said on Thursday that decisions announced by judges out of anger did not meet the standards of justice. The IHC CJ was speaking at a ceremony organised by the Islamabad High Court Bar Association. Expressing concerns over young lawyers' lack of learning, the IHC CJ said that in the past, a new entrant in the field of law used to spend around six months in the chamber of a senior lawyer where he was groomed to meet grinding demands of legal practice. He conceded that he also flew off the handles at time for grooming people, insisting that people didn't usually understand if treated too politely. Justice Farooq deplored that idea of chamber institution was fast fading as lawyers spent more time in gossiping instead of learning, which he said was the nursery for producing the best legal minds. He said that our predecessors kept the chamber alive while it had been kept defunct for the last ten years. "I was part of the chamber run by Mian Nisar, the father of former Chief Justice Saqib Nisar and ex-CJP himself. I learnt a lot from them," he added. Lawyers should come to the court fully prepared with proper notes before starting their arguments, adding that ethics to work in the courts must be learnt by the newbies of law. — Agencies

Ukraine on 'irreversible path' to NATO membership

WASHINGTON: NATO has agreed to launch a new program to provide reliable military aid and training to Ukraine and help it get ready to join the alliance. The plan will supplement, but not replace, the two-year-old Ukraine Defense Contact Group, which was created by US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin after Russia launched its February 2022 invasion into Ukraine. That group, with more than 50 nations from Europe and around the world, coordinates the delivery of much-needed weapons and training to Ukraine. But the failure of the US Congress to fund any weapons for months due to partisan gridlock late last year and early this year, as well as similar lags in European Union funds, underscored how vulnerable that effort was to the vagaries of politics. And the delays allowed Russian troops to gain the advantage on the battlefield, and led to widespread complaints from Ukraine's forces about lack of equipment and weapons. — Agencies

China, Iran slam NATO's 'provocations'

BEIJING: China has warned NATO against "provoking confrontation" over its ties with Russia after the Western military alliance accused Beijing of being a "decisive enabler" of Moscow's war against Ukraine. The warning on Thursday came as NATO leaders meeting in Washington, DC, promised to bolster Ukraine and Europe's defences against Russia and made clear that China was also becoming a focus of the alliance. A spokesperson for Beijing's mission to the European Union said NATO should "stop hyping up the so-called China threat and provoking confrontation and rivalry, and do more to contribute to world peace and stability". — Agencies


LHC's first woman CJ Aalia Neelum sworn in

Punjab Governor Saleem Haider Khan administers oath to Justice Neelum

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Justice Aalia Neelum shattered the glass ceiling, becoming the first woman chief justice in the 142-year history of the Lahore High Court. Punjab Governor Saleem Haider Khan administered the oath to the new chief justice at the Governor House, with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz in attendance. Headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, the Judicial Commission of Pakistan had unanimously greenlighted her elevation after considering the nominations of three judges for the position of LHC chief justice, including Justice Shujaat Ali Khan and Justice Ali Baqar Najafi. Following the commission's approval, President Asif Ali Zardari had Wednesday officially notified the appointment of Justice Neelum as the high court's chief justice.

She will now be serving as the 47th chief justice of the Lahore High Court since 1920 and 54th overall since March 21, 1882, when this judicial institution was called the Chief Court of Lahore. The president had also notified the appointment of Sindh High Court's (SHC) chief justice along with that of Justice Neelum. The top positions fell vacant after three high court judges, including the former chief justices of SHC and LHC – Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi and Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan, respectively – had been elevated to the Supreme Court last month. In May 2023, Justice Neelum was a part of the high court bench that had directed former premier Imran Khan to join the investigation in 121 cases registered against him. In April 2024, Justice Neelum was among the four LHC judges who had received suspicious letters.



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